

Message Text

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43

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 SAM-01

AF-06 OPIC-06 /082 W

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P R 051732Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4853

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO

USEC BRUSSELS

UNCLAS MADRID 1744

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, SP

SUBJ: PRESS REACTION TO VITORIA VIOLENCE

REF: MADRID 1609; MADRID 1381

1. THE DAILY PRESS REACTED STRONGLY TO VIOLENCE IN VITORIA.
IN RECENT WEEKS THE MOOD IN THE PRESS WAS THAT THE GOVT HAD,
WITHOUT FANFARE, PASSED ITS FIRST MAJOR TEST -- IT HAD SHOWN
THAT IT COULD GOVERN AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, THAT SPANIARDS COULD
BE GOVERNED WITHOUT COERCION IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF NON-VIOLENT
DISAGREEMENT. MIXED WITH THIS OPTIMISTIC MOOD, HOWEVER, WAS THE
CONCERN THAT THE PROCESS OF CHANGE MIGHT BE DERAILED,
PARTICULARLY BY A COMBINATION OF PROVOCATION FROM THE
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LEFT AND A RIGHT-WING BACKLASH.

2. THE LEAD COMMENTARY IN "ARRIBA" (NATIONAL MOVEMENT) FEB 19 EXPRESSED OPTIMISM. IT NOTED A "MODEST CONCLUSION: THE CHANGE IN ATTITUDES HAS ALREADY OCCURRED." WHILE PEOPLE WILL CONTINUE TO DISAGREE THEY WILL ALSO COOPERATE -- E.G., RUIZ GIMENEZ WILL CONTINUE TO CALL FOR A CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY BUT HE HAS ANNOUNCED, AS HAVE THE PSOE, THAT HIS GROUP WILL PARTICIPATE IN THE ELECTIONS FOR A LEGISLATURE. ON THE OTHER HAND "ABC" (MONARCHIST) EXPRESSED CONCERN AT THE "SPONTANEOUS AND CONFUSED" POLITICAL ACTIVITY WHICH SERVED NEITHER TO EXPRESS "ADEQUATELY THE MULTIPLE POLITICAL TENDENCIES" NOR TO FURTHER THE "POLICIES OF CHANGE AND REFORM". IT CALLED FOR A RAPID LEGALIZATION OF PARTIES IN ORDER TO "INSTITUTIONALIZE" THE OPPOSITION.

3. NOW THE ATMOSPHERE HAS BEEN SOURED BY THE LABOR STRIFE BUELING ALSO WORRIES ABOUT ARBITRARY GOVT RESPONSE OR EVEN INTERVENTION BY THE MILITARY. IN REACTION TO THE RECENT SPEECH BY THE MINISTER FOR DEFENSE AFFAIRS, LT. GEN. SANTIAGO Y DIAZ MENDIVIL (REF) AN EDITORIAL IN "YA" (CATHOLIC INDEPENDENT), FEB 27, SAID THAT THE GOVT HAD COMMITTED ITSELF TO A PROGRAM OF REFORM IN WHICH THE ARMED FORCES COULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO INTERVENE, PROVIDED THAT THIS PROCESS OF REFORM IS MARKED "BY THE INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF A POLITICAL PLURALISM WHICH RESPECTS THE RULES OF THE DEMOCRATIC GAME." AN EDITORIAL IN "ABC" ON FEB 21 WARNED, IN THE LIGHT OF RECENT VIOLENT EVENTS IN THE MAIN MADRID UNIVERSITY, (MADRID 1381) THAT "THE BEST WAY TO ATTACK A POLITICAL SYSTEM IS TO SUBVERT THE SOCIAL ORDER" AND THE GOVT'S REFORM PROGRAM WAS BEING CONSPIRED AGAINST BY THOSE "WHO SEEK TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE LEAST PRETEXTS TO PROVOKE A CLIMATE OF VIOLENCE IN THE MOST DIVERSE AREAS OF SOCIAL LIFE." ON MARCH 3 "YA" WARNED, ONCE AGAIN, AGAINST POLITICAL STRIKES WHICH COULD ONLY PROVOKE A REACTION AND SAID "THAT THE WORKERS AS WELL AS THE MIDDLE CLASSES OF THIS COUNTRY HAVE TO REALIZE THAT THEY ARE BEING USED FOR INTERESTS MUCH REMOVED FROM THEIR OWN."

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4. INTO THIS ATMOSPHERE CAME THE THREE DEATHS IN VITORIA. "ABC" SAID FLATLY THAT THE VIOLENCE WAS PROVOKED BY "CLANDESTINE GROUPS" WHO BADLY NEEDED A RESOUNDING SUCCESS AFTER REPEATED FAILURES IN MADRID AND BARCELONA. "TERROR SEIZED THE STREETS...AND WITH IT THE MADNESS AND HATE OF THOSE WHO SEEK ONLY THE DESTRUCTION OF ANY TYPE OF EVOLUTION, OF ANY SYSTEM WHICH CONTAINS DEMOCRACY IN ITS STRUCTURES." "ARRIBA" SAID THE EVENTS WERE A JAR OF COLD

WATER ON THE POLITICAL HONEYMOON. "THE THEORETICAL OPTION FOR THE RIGHT IS NOW AN EXTREME POSITION FROM WHICH, GIVEN WHAT HAS HAPPENED, ANY PATH WHICH LEADS TO DEMOCRACY IS TO BE CONDEMNED." "YA" APPEALED FOR CALM AND THE RAPID LEGALIZATION OF POLITICAL GROUPS TO TAKE THE PLAY AWAY FROM THE CLANDESTINE GROUPS. "YA'S" LEADING POLITICAL COMMENTATOR, LUIS APOSTUA (FOCUSING ON ANOTHER ASPECT OF THE VIOLENCE), SAID WHAT OCCURRED IN VITORIA WAS NOT A "REVOLUTIONARY PROLOGUE" BUT AN "ANARCHIC AND DISORDERED EXPLOSION," THE RESULT OF THE CREATION OF AN URBAN PROLETARIAT WITHOUT LEGAL MODES OF POLITICAL EXPRESSION.
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